

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ALMONT AMBULATORY SURGERY  
CENTER, LLC, a California limited  
liability company, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

UNITEDHEALTH GROUP, INC.; et al.,  
Defendants.

UNITED HEALTHCARE SERVICES,  
INC.; et al.,

Counterclaim Plaintiffs

v.

ALMONT AMBULATORY SURGERY  
CENTER, LLC, a California limited  
liability company; et al.,

Counterclaim Defendants.

Case No. 2:14-CV-03053-MWF (VBKx)

**[PROPOSED] ORDER  
REGARDING ELECTRONICALLY  
STORED INFORMATION (ESI)  
DISCOVERY PLAN**

Judge: Hon. Michael W. Fitzgerald

Magistrate Judge: Hon. Victor B. Kenton

Trial Date: None Set  
Complaint Filed: March 21, 2014

The above-referenced matter came before the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge upon the Parties' efforts to develop a protocol for the preservation and production of electronically stored information ("ESI"). The Court, upon the stipulation submitted by the Parties, now makes and enters the following Order.

1 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that, pursuant to Rules 26 and 34 of the Federal  
2 Rules of Civil Procedure, all Parties in the above-referenced matter must comply with  
3 the following obligations in this litigation:

4 **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

5 A. Absent special circumstances, the specifications set forth below shall  
6 govern the production of all documents, testimony, exhibits, ESI, and any other  
7 materials and information (including, to avoid any ambiguity, any copies, summaries,  
8 or derivations thereof) produced by the Parties during discovery in the Action.

9 B. Nothing in this Protocol – nor the production of any documents pursuant  
10 to this Protocol – is intended to waive any Party’s rights with respect to any attorney-  
11 client, work product or other applicable privilege, all of which are preserved.

12 C. All documents produced hereunder shall be governed by the terms of the  
13 Protective Order entered in this action and any other applicable orders entered by the  
14 Court in this action.

15 **II. PRODUCTION OF HARD COPY DOCUMENTS**

16 A. TIFFs. Documents should be produced in the form of single-page, black  
17 and white, Group IV TIFFs format image files. Each TIFF image should be named as  
18 its corresponding Bates number. Original document orientation should be maintained  
19 (i.e., portrait to portrait and landscape to landscape). Bates numbers, confidentiality  
20 designations, and redactions should be burned into the TIFF image files. TIFF image  
21 files should be provided in a self-identified “Images” folder.

22 B. OCR Text Files. Optical Character Recognition (“OCR”) text files shall  
23 be provided as a single text tile for each document, not one text file per page. Each file  
24 should be named with the beginning Bates number that is assigned to its corresponding  
25 document, followed by .txt. OCR text tiles should be provided in a self-identified  
26 “Text” directory. To the extent a document is redacted, OCR text files for such a  
27 document shall not contain text for redacted portions.  
28

1 C. Database Load Files/Cross-Reference Files. Documents should be  
2 provided with Concordance-compatible image and data load tiles (i.e., .OPT and .DAT  
3 files) using standard Concordance delimiters. Concordance-compatible image and  
4 data load files (i.e., .OPT and .DAT files) should be provided in a self-identified  
5 “Data” folder.

6 D. Coding Fields. Absent special circumstances, documents should be  
7 produced with at least the following searchable information in accompanying  
8 delimited data files: (1) BegBates; (2) EndBates; (3) BegAttach; (4) EndAttach; and  
9 (5) Custodian. Custodians should be identified using the convention “last name\_\_first  
10 name.” Entity/departmental custodians should be identified with a description of the  
11 entity or department. A producing party shall use a uniform description of a particular  
12 custodian across productions.

13 E. Bates Numbering. Each TIFF image should be assigned a Bates number  
14 that: (1) is unique across the entire document production; (2) maintains a constant  
15 length across the entire production (i.e., padded to the same number of characters); (3)  
16 contains no special characters or embedded spaces; and (4) is sequential within a given  
17 document. If a Bates number or set of Bates numbers is skipped in a production, the  
18 producing party will so note in a cover letter or production log accompanying the  
19 production.

### 20 **III. PRODUCTION OF ESI**

21 A. TIFFs. Documents should be produced in the form of single-page, black  
22 and white, Group IV TIFFs format image files. Each TIFF image should be named as  
23 its corresponding Bates number. Original document orientation should be maintained  
24 (i.e., portrait to portrait and landscape to landscape). Bates numbers, confidentiality  
25 designations, and redactions should be burned into the TIFF image files. TIFF image  
26 files should be provided in a self-identified “Images” folder.

27 B. Metadata Fields and Processing. Absent special circumstances, each of  
28 the metadata and coding fields set forth in Appendix 1 that can be extracted from a

1 document shall be produced for that document, to the extent already in existence and  
2 reasonably accessible. To the extent that metadata does not exist, is not reasonably  
3 accessible or available, or would be unduly burdensome to collect, nothing in this ESI  
4 Protocol shall require any Party to extract, capture, collect or produce such data. The  
5 Parties are not obligated to populate manually any of the fields in Appendix 1 if such  
6 fields cannot be extracted from a document, with the exception of the following: (1)  
7 BegBates; (2) EndBates; (3) BegAttach; (4) EndAttach; (5) Custodian; and (6)  
8 NativeLink fields (which may be populated by the party or the party's vendor).

9 C. Extracted Text Files. For each document, an extracted text file, created  
10 using the extracted full text, should be provided along with its corresponding TIFF  
11 image file(s) and metadata. The file name of each extracted text file should be  
12 identical to that of the first image page of its corresponding document, followed by  
13 .txt. File names should not contain any special characters or embedded spaces. The  
14 text of native files should be extracted directly from the native file. However, if a  
15 document has been redacted, OCR of the redacted document will suffice in lieu of  
16 extracted text.

17 D. Database Load Files/Cross-Reference Files. Documents should be  
18 provided with Concordance-compatible image and data load files (i.e., .OPT and .DAT  
19 files) using standard Concordance delimiters. Concordance-compatible image and  
20 data load files (i.e., .OPT and .DAT files) should be provided in a self-identified  
21 "Data" folder.

22 E. Native Files. Absent special circumstances, MS Excel files, .CSV files,  
23 MS Access, Quickbooks and other similar spreadsheet files shall be produced in native  
24 format ("Native Files"). Native Files should be provided in a self-identified "Natives"  
25 directory. Each Native File should be produced with a corresponding single-page  
26 TIFF placeholder image, which will contain language indicating that the document is  
27 being produced as a Native File. Native Files should be named with the beginning  
28 Bates number that is assigned to that specific record in the production. A

1 “NativeLink” entry for each spreadsheet should be included in the .DAT load file  
2 indicating the relative file path to each Native File on the production media. Native  
3 Files should be produced with extracted text and applicable metadata fields as set forth  
4 in Appendix 1. For documents that contain redacted text, the Parties may either apply  
5 the redactions directly on the Native File itself or produce TIFF image files with  
6 burned in redactions in lieu of a Native File and TIFF placeholder image. Each  
7 producing party will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its discovery vendor, prior  
8 to conversion to TIFF, reveals hidden data from redacted Native Files that are  
9 produced as TIFF image files and will be formatted so as to be readable. (For  
10 example, column widths should be formatted so that numbers do not appear as  
11 “#####.”) Under these circumstances, all single-page TIFF images shall include  
12 row and column headings.

13 For documents whose native format is PowerPoint, the original native files and  
14 single page black and white Group IV TIFF format image files shall be produced.

15 F. Structured Data. To the extent responding to a discovery request requires  
16 production of ESI contained in a database, the producing party may comply with the  
17 discovery request by querying the database for discoverable information and  
18 generating a report in a reasonably usable and exportable electronic format (for  
19 example, in Excel or .csv format). The first line of each such file will, to the extent  
20 possible, show the column headers for each field of data included. The Parties shall  
21 meet and confer as needed to finalize the appropriate data extraction and production  
22 format for specific information contained in particular databases.

23 G. Requests for Other Native Files. Other than as specifically set forth  
24 above, a producing party need not produce documents in native format. If good cause  
25 exists for the receiving party to request production of certain documents in native  
26 format, the receiving party may request production in native format by providing: (1)  
27 a list of the Bates numbers of documents it requests to be produced in native format;  
28 and (2) an explanation of the need for reviewing such documents in native format.

1 Each document produced in response to such requests shall be produced with a  
2 “NativeLink” entry in the .DAT load file indicating the relative file path to each Native  
3 File on the production media, and all extracted text and applicable metadata fields set  
4 forth in Appendix 1. No request may be made for the production of structured data  
5 that is the subject of Section H (above) in native format.

6 H. Color. Documents containing color need not be produced in color in the  
7 first instance. However, if good cause exists for the receiving party to request  
8 production of certain documents in color, the receiving party may request production  
9 of such documents in color by providing: (1) a list of the Bates numbers of documents  
10 it requests to be produced in color format; and (2) an explanation of the need for  
11 production in color format. The producing party shall not unreasonably deny such  
12 requests, but need not make such production until the Parties reach agreement  
13 regarding the additional costs associated with the production of documents in color.

14 Documents produced in color shall be produced as JPEG images with Exif  
15 compression, 200 dpi or higher and 24-bit color depth. Each color document image  
16 file shall be named with the unique Bates number of the first page of the document in  
17 question followed by the file extension “JPG.”

18 I. De-duplication. The Parties shall make reasonable efforts to deduplicate  
19 ESI. ESI may be deduplicated vertically within each custodian or horizontally across  
20 custodians. ESI will be considered duplicative if it has the same content excluding  
21 metadata. For example, duplicates would include copies of the same electronic file  
22 saved on the local hard drives and/or network shared drives of multiple custodians,  
23 even if different instances of the file reflect different dates created. Documents with  
24 the same content but different metadata can also be identified through the use of near-  
25 duplication technology, provided that only documents identified by such technology  
26 are 100% near-duplicates shall be considered duplicates for purposes of this paragraph.

27 J. Document Families. The terms “parent,” “child,” or “family” have the  
28 meaning conventionally applied in the context of e-discovery. If a parent document is



1 responsive to a discovery request, then all family members of that document will also  
2 be deemed responsive and will be produced unless otherwise privileged or exempt  
3 from production. To the extent any document in such a family is excluded from  
4 production, a slip-sheet shall be included in lieu of the document noting the reason for  
5 excluding the document from the production. If a child document is responsive but the  
6 parent document is not, the child document will be produced but the party is not  
7 obligated to produce the parent document or other child documents in the same family  
8 unless those documents are also responsive. Parent and child relationships shall be  
9 preserved in that child documents will be sequentially Bates numbered following the  
10 respective parent documents.

11 K. Email Threads. Where multiple email messages are part of a single  
12 “thread,” a Party is only required to produce the most inclusive message and need not  
13 produce earlier, less inclusive email messages that are fully contained, including  
14 attachments, within the most inclusive email message. For the avoidance of doubt,  
15 only email messages for which the parent document and all attachments are contained  
16 in the more inclusive email message will be considered less inclusive email messages  
17 that need not be produced; if the later message contains different text (such as where  
18 the later message adds in-line comments to the body of the earlier message), or does  
19 not include an attachment that was part of the earlier message, the earlier message  
20 must be produced. Where an email thread is withheld from production under a claim  
21 of privilege, the Party’s privilege log should reflect only the most inclusive message.

22 L. Preservation of Potentially Relevant Information. Each Party shall be  
23 responsible for taking reasonable and proportional steps to preserve potentially  
24 relevant documents and ESI within its possession, custody, or control.

#### 25 IV. ENCRYPTION

26 To maximize the security of information in transit, any media on which  
27 documents are produced may be encrypted by the producing party. In such cases, the  
28

1 producing party shall transmit the encryption key or password to the requesting party,  
2 under separate cover, contemporaneously with sending the encrypted media.

3 **V. PROCESSING OF THIRD-PARTY DOCUMENTS**

4 A. A Party that issues a non-party subpoena ("Issuing Party") shall include a  
5 copy of this ESI Protocol with the subpoena and request that the non-party produce  
6 documents in accordance with the specifications set forth herein.

7 B. The Issuing Party is responsible for producing to all other Parties any  
8 documents obtained pursuant to a subpoena to any non-party. To the extent practical  
9 given the data volume, productions by a non-party should be produced by the Issuing  
10 Party to all other Parties within seven days of the non-party's production to the Issuing  
11 Party.

12 C. Nothing in this ESI Protocol is intended to or should be interpreted as  
13 narrowing, expanding, or otherwise affecting the rights of the Parties or third parties to  
14 object to a subpoena.

15 **VI. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

16 A. Nothing in this ESI Protocol shall be interpreted to require disclosure of  
17 information protected by the attorney-client privilege, work-product doctrine, or any  
18 other applicable privilege or immunity. The Parties do not waive any objections as to  
19 the production, discoverability, admissibility, or confidentiality of documents. All  
20 productions are subject to the Protective Order entered by the Court in this Action.

21 B. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 502(d), the inadvertent production  
22 of any Discovery Materials that would be protected from disclosure pursuant to the  
23 attorney-client privilege; the work product doctrine; state or federal law, rule, or  
24 regulation; confidentiality requirements; agreement of the Parties; or any other  
25 applicable privilege or doctrine will not constitute a waiver of the applicable privilege,  
26 agreement, or doctrine. If any such Discovery Materials are inadvertently produced,  
27 the Parties shall follow the procedure set forth in the Stipulated Protective Order  
28 entered in this matter.



1 C. This Protocol does not address, limit, or determine the relevance,  
2 discoverability, agreement to produce, or admission into evidence of ESI. The Parties  
3 are not waiving the right to seek any discovery and are not waiving any objections to  
4 any discovery requests.

5 D. The Parties shall make good faith efforts to comply with and resolve any  
6 differences concerning compliance with this ESI Protocol. If a producing party,  
7 notwithstanding their good faith efforts, cannot comply with any material aspect of this  
8 ESI Protocol or if compliance with such material aspect would be unreasonable, a  
9 reasonable time before the date of production, such party shall inform the requesting  
10 party in writing as to why compliance with the ESI Protocol is impossible or  
11 unreasonable. No party may seek relief from the Court concerning compliance with  
12 the ESI Protocol unless it has conferred with other affected Parties. Each Party has  
13 identified an e-discovery liaison who is and will be knowledgeable about and  
14 responsible for discussing matters related to its ESI. Each e-discovery liaison will be,  
15 or have access to those who are, knowledgeable about the technical aspects of e-  
16 discovery, including the location, nature, accessibility, format, collection, search  
17 methodologies, and production of ESI in this matter. The Parties will rely on the e-  
18 discovery liaisons, as needed, to meet and confer about matters involving ESI and to  
19 help resolve disputes without court intervention. Any attorney representing a Party in  
20 the case, including the e-discovery liaison, may participate in meet-and-confer  
21 conferences, and it is not required that the e-discovery liaison be present for the Parties  
22 to meet and confer about matters involving ESI.

23 E. The Parties will endeavor in good faith to assure reasonableness and  
24 proportionality in ESI-related discovery, and, in so doing, will consider the factors set  
25 forth in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(2)(C).

26 F. Nothing in this Agreement shall affect, in any way, a producing party's  
27 right to seek reimbursement for costs associated with collection, review, and/or  
28 production of documents. The Parties shall meet and confer regarding cost sharing or

1 cost shifting for the collection, review, and production of documents from sources that  
2 the Party identifies as not reasonably accessible because of undue burden or cost.

3 G. Nothing in this Agreement shall affect, in any way, a producing party's  
4 ability to determine its best course of action for identifying documents, including but  
5 not limited to, the use of search terms, clustering, and predictive analysis.

6  
7 IT IS SO ORDERED.

8  
9  
10 Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Victor B. Kenton  
United States Magistrate Judge

**Appendix 1**  
**Fields and Metadata To Be Produced**

Field	Data Type	Paper	Loose Native Files & Attachments	Email
BegDoc	TEXT	Start Bates	Start Bates	Start Bates
EndDoc	TEXT	End Bates	End Bates	End Bates
BegAttach	TEXT	Starting bates number of document family	Starting bates number of document family	Starting bates number of document family
EndAttach	TEXT	Ending bates number of document family	Ending bates number of document family	Ending bates number of document family
Custodian	TEXT – separate entries with “,”	All custodians of the document	All custodians of the document even if de-duplicated prior to production	All custodians of the document even if de-duplicated prior to production
Folder	Text		File path where original file was collected from	Folder where email was collected from. Includes folder locations within email container files such as PST and NSF
From	Text			Sender of message
To	TEXT – separate entries with “,”			Recipients of message
CC	TEXT – separate			Copied recipients



	e entries with “,” ;			
BCC	TEXT – separat e entries with “,” ;			Blind copied recipients
Subject	TEXT or MEMO if over 255 charact ers			Subject of message
DateSent	Date (dd- mmm- yyyy) – eg 03- Mar- 2012			Date message sent
Time Sent	Text (hh:m m:ss)			Time message sent
Date Received	Date (dd- mmm- yyyy) – eg 03- Mar- 2012			Date message received
Time Recv	TEXT (hh:m m:ss)			Time message received
File Name	Text (hh:m m:ss)		Name of original file	Name of original file



1	File Extension	Text		Extension of original file	Extension of original file
2	DateCreated	Date (dd-mm-yyyy) – eg 03-Mar-2012		Date file was created	
3					
4					
5					
6					
7	DateModified	Date (dd-mm-yyyy) – eg 03-Mar-2012		Date file was last modified	
8					
9					
10					
11	Title	TEXT or MEMO if over 255 characters		Title from document metadata	
12					
13					
14					
15					
16	Author	Text		Document author from metadata	
17					
18	Company	Text		Document company or organization from metadata	
19					
20	Hash	Text		MD5 or SHA-1 Hash Value	MD5 or SHA-1 Hash Value
21					
22	Text Files	Txt files should be named the same as the beg doc and delivered in the same folder as the images (eg, ABC0000001.txt)			
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					

	ed in the same folder as the images (eg, ABC00 00001.t xt)			
Native Files	Native files should be named the same as the beg doc and deliver ed in the same folder as the images (eg, ABC00 00001. xls)			